

Providence City Plan Commission

September 16, 2025



AGENDA ITEM 7 ■ 290 PUBLIC STREET



View of the site from 290 public



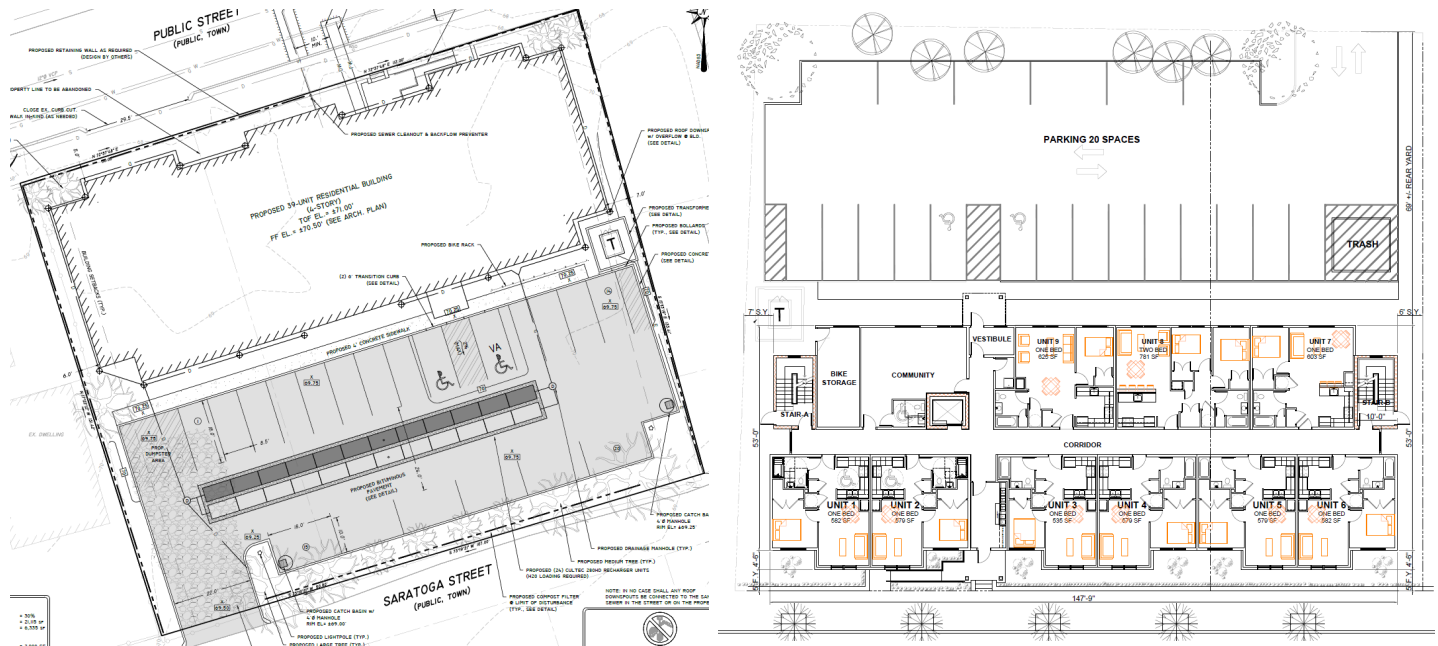
Aerial view of the site



Public Street elevation

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	290 and 298 Public Street	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is proposing to construct a four story multifamily residential building with 39 residential units. Dimensional adjustments from the height, side setback and parking requirements are requested. Pursuant to UDR, the applicant is requesting relief from the rear yard and total maximum impervious surface coverage requirements.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	25-044UDR—290 Public Street Minor Land Development		
PROJECT LOCATION:	290 Public Street AP 48 Lot 938 and 939; R-P zoning district	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the preliminary plan with requested relief
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Lower South Providence	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Proposed site plan with first floor layout

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The subject lots measure approximately 21,115 SF, and are located between Saratoga Street to the north and Public Street to the south. The lots are zoned R-P and the applicant is proposing to construct a 39 unit multifamily residential building focused on providing affordable and special needs housing with onsite parking and associated improvements.

The applicant is seeking the following dimensional adjustments:

- A dimensional adjustment for a height of approximately 48'8" where a maximum height of 45' is permitted.
- Side setbacks of 6' and 7' where 10' is required.
- A 50% parking reduction where 39 spaces are required but 19 will be provided.

In addition, the applicant is seeking relief from the total maximum and total rear yard impervious coverage requirements pursuant to UDR. Approximately 74% of the rear yard will be impervious where 50% is permitted and 78.3% total maximum impervious coverage is proposed where 65% is permitted.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The site is zoned R-P, where multifamily development is permitted by right.

Dimensions and Site Design

The development will be located on a through lot between Public and Saratoga Streets with Public Street designated as the front yard. The building will be set within the 8'6" front yard setback build-to zone on Public Street from where pedestrian access is provided. Access is also provided from the parking area in the rear with stair access provided from the side of the building. The transformer and dumpster will be enclosed and located behind the building and in the parking lot.

A height of approximately 48'8" is proposed for which a dimensional adjustment has been requested as it is over the 45' height limit of the zone. The R-P zone requires a minimum side yard setback of 10' for lots with a width of over 60' but setbacks of 6' and 7' are proposed, for which an adjustment has been requested. Variances from the total maximum impervious surface coverage limit of 65%, and maximum impervious surface coverage limit of 50% have been requested, with the applicant proposing total impervious coverage of 79% and rear yard impervious coverage of 74%.

The building's exterior will be treated with clapboard siding and brick veneer on the first floor and a combination of clapboard and shiplap siding on the upper stories. Gabled roofs will provide three dimensional variety to the design with contrasting projecting and recessed areas on the building. Over 25% of transparency will be provided on the front façade. The use of consistent materials, adequate fenestration and breaking up of the façade with the use of projecting features and gabled roofs conforms to the ordinance's design requirements for multifamily dwellings.

Parking and site access

Thirty nine parking spaces are required for 39 units and 20 will be provided, for which the applicant has requested a dimensional adjustment as the amount falls within 50% of the requirement. Parking will be provided at the rear of the lot and accessed from Saratoga Street. Fourteen spaces will be located adjacent to the building and six will be parked parallel to Saratoga Street. Bicycle parking will be provided within the building.

Landscaping

Approximately 6,335 SF of canopy coverage is required to meet the 30% canopy coverage requirement for the development. The applicant intends to meet the requirement using a combination of small, medium and large trees in the parking strip adjacent to the lot, and on Public Street. The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement based on the conceptual plan and is developing the final plan in conjunction with the City Forester.

Drainage and stormwater management

The applicant will employ a seeding program and erosion barriers like haybales to control erosion off the site during construction. Stormwater treatment chambers will be located under the parking area. The DPW required that the applicant present sewer utilization calculations with the stormwater management plan, which shall be subject to the City Engineer's approval.

Discussion—Dimensional Relief

The applicant is seeking dimensional relief from Table 4-1 of the ordinance to allow for 74% rear yard impervious coverage where 50% is permitted and 79% total maximum impervious surface coverage where 65% is permitted.

Findings—Dimensional Variance

Section 1902 of the zoning ordinance requires that the CPC find evidence of the following standards in order to grant a variance:

1. That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to the general characteristics of the surrounding area; and is not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant, excepting those physical disabilities addressed in Rhode Island General Laws §45-24-30(16).

The subject property is unique as it is a through lot located between two streets and will be used to provide affordable and special needs housing in a zone that allows for multifamily development. Per the applicant, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires amenities like first floor dwelling units, wider corridors, large clearances, and elevator

access which contributes to the excess impervious coverage. The applicant is also required to meet the parking requirement, which adds to the required amount of paving in addition to the building's enlarged footprint. The applicant has requested a dimensional adjustment for parking which reduces the required amount of paving, limiting the amount of relief requested. The proposed stormwater controls would further mitigate the effects of excess paving.

2. That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant.

As discussed, the hardship appears to be related to the requirement to conform to the ADA and provide parking which is not a result of the applicant's prior action.

3. That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of this Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan.

Based on a site visit and provided plans, the requested relief is not expected to have a negative effect on the surrounding character or neighboring property as the amount of parking will be less than what was provided with the previous use. Provision of housing conforms to objectives H-2 and H-3 of the comprehensive plan which encourages development of housing for all and provision of housing for populations with special needs.

4. In addition, the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, requires that evidence be entered into the record of the proceedings showing that in granting a dimensional variance, the hardship that will be suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted will amount to more than a mere inconvenience.

Based on a review of plans, denial of the relief could result in more than a mere inconvenience as it would affect the building's compliance with the ADA and could result in fewer affordable dwelling units.

Action—Dimensional Variance

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should grant the requested dimensional relief for total maximum and rear yard impervious surface coverage.

Findings—Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant is seeking dimensional adjustments for building height, side setback and parking as discussed above. Per section 1005.B of the Development Review Regulations (DRR), the requested adjustments are within the allowable limits that can be granted by the CPC in section 1904.E.2 of the ordinance. The applicant is eligible for the adjustments per section 1904.E.1.f of the ordinance through provision of housing for low and moderate income families. Provision of affordable and special needs housing, which is required to conform to the ADA, is reasonably related to the requests. The DPD recommends that the CPC grant the requested adjustments finding that the applicant has satisfactorily addressed the criteria in the DRR.

Action—Dimensional Adjustments

The CPC should vote to grant the dimensional adjustments, finding that the applicant meets the criteria for dimensional adjustments in 1904.E of the ordinance and having made positive findings in conformance with section 1005.B of the DRR.

Findings—Preliminary Plan

Section 1005 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis

contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the Preliminary Plan stage:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

Per the future land use map of the Providence Comprehensive Plan, the lot is located at the intersection of the high density residential and medium density residential land use designations, which are suited for multifamily residential development. A multifamily development that provides affordable housing for some with special needs conforms to this designation and to objectives H-2 and H-3 of the comprehensive plan, which encourages construction of new housing and provision of housing for populations with special needs.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Multifamily development is permitted by right in the R-P zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the ordinance, subject to the CPC granting the requested dimensional adjustments.

Parking: The applicant will meet the parking requirement subject to the CPC granting a dimensional adjustment for parking.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement. The planting of street trees to meet the canopy coverage requirement shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

The drainage plan shall be subject to the City Engineer's review and the approval shall be submitted with the final plan. No significant negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is expected to come into conformance with applicable environmental regulations.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.*

The applicant is required to merge the lots prior to final plan approval. There are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot will comply with the dimensional requirements of the R-P zone. The applicant is required to obtain any encroachment permits at the permitting stage.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Adequate vehicular and pedestrian access is provided from Public and Saratoga Streets.

ACTION—Preliminary Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to grant preliminary plan approval subject to the following conditions:

1. The drainage plan shall be subject to the City Engineer's approval.
2. The planting of the street trees shall be subject to the City Forester's approval. The applicant shall be responsible for maintenance of all proposed street trees.
3. The applicant shall merge the lots prior to final plan approval.